

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
 Despite US economic war, 'here we are, opening Cuba's book festival'
 — PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 89/NO. 8 MARCH 3, 2025

Israel: Destroy Hamas, prevent Tehran getting nuclear weapons

BY SETH GALINSKY

Despite the unstable ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon the key questions — Israel's dismantling of Hamas so it cannot carry out more bloody pogroms against Jews, as well as Israel preventing Tehran from getting nuclear weapons — remain unresolved. This ensures that further conflicts to defend Israel's existence as a refuge for Jews lie ahead.

The dismantling of Hamas would create better conditions for workers of all nationalities and religions to be able to come together to defend their own class interests and to advance the class struggle.

A battered Hamas is using the ceasefire to try to recover from the big blows it suffered, reimpose its brutal dictatorship over the people of Gaza, reconstruct its army of death squads and prepare more pogroms against Jews in Israel. They say they will attack Jews "over and over again" until

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'Militant' fights bans in Florida prison and in a jail in Phoenix

BY JANET POST

Issue no. 2 of the *Militant*, dated Jan. 20, 2025, has been banned at Santa Rosa Correctional Institution in Milton, Florida. A letter sent to the paper from a subscriber there said it "was impounded for no reason." He attached the notice of impoundment from prison authorities.

It cites the front-page article, "Israel fights for right to exist as a refuge from Jew-hatred," and a text box on page 7, "Jew-hatred, 'racial purity' at heart of Hamas program," as the reason for the impoundment.

Prison officials say the ban will stand, "pending review by the Department's Literature Review Committee," because "the publication contains subject matter that is inadmissible." It "presents a threat to the security, order, or rehabilitative objectives of the correctional system or the safety of any person."

The article reports on political developments in the Middle East, explaining the importance of Israel's fight to defend

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Socialist Workers Party campaign

Workers need to build a party of labor, take political power



Militant/Betsy Farley

John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Cincinnati, talks with Dawn Willey in Lincoln Heights. "You are explaining things that need to be heard," Willey said.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS AND TERRY EVANS

"We can win working people to get behind the fight for a society where all workers in the U.S. are welcome and join together to defend our class interests against capitalist exploitation," Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Oakland, told people he met at a protest against de-

portations at the Civic Center Plaza in San Francisco Feb. 16 "This starts with fighting today for an amnesty for workers without papers."

The rally of hundreds took place at the culmination of a march that began 21 miles to the south in San Mateo. "Immigrant workers are playing a leading role in union struggles today, like

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Three years since Moscow invaded: Back fight for Ukraine sovereignty!



AP photo/Efrem Lukatsky

Ukrainian workers inspect protective dome of Chernobyl nuclear plant damaged by Feb. 14 drone strike. Moscow targets civilians, Ukraine's energy sites, including nuclear power plants.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

February 24 marks the opening of the fourth year of Russian President Vladimir Putin's full-scale war against the people of Ukraine. Ten days before, a drone strike, which Kyiv blamed on Moscow, hit the former Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine near the Belarus border. Luckily, no radiation was leaked.

On Feb. 12 President Donald Trump held a lengthy phone conversation

with Putin, declaring "the war must end." This followed a surprise prisoner swap between Washington and Moscow. Trump later called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to update him. With whatever shifts, Trump's goal, like his predecessor, is to advance the interests of U.S. imperialism, not Ukrainian sovereignty.

This is part of the unfolding consequences of the biggest military

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East Palestine meetings discuss two-year battle against effects of train derailment

BY CANDACE WAGNER

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — On Feb. 3, 2023, a Norfolk Southern train derailed here, dumping 38 cars on the ground, including 11 full of toxic chemicals. A massive fire lit up this small town. Over the objections of the company that made the chemicals, Norfolk Southern bosses bullied area authorities into believing that one of

five tank cars carrying vinyl chloride was in danger of exploding. The decision was made to drain and burn 1.1 million pounds of the toxic gas. The resultant toxic smoke plume spread over 16 states.

Norfolk Southern immediately re-laid tracks, getting trains running through East Palestine again. It took the mobilization of residents here confronting the rail bosses to force them to reverse course. The new tracks were torn up, and months of work began removing contaminated soil.

Many area residents experienced serious health difficulties. Some still

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What does Trump's war against 'big government' mean for working people?

BY TERRY EVANS

Since his inauguration Jan. 20, President Donald Trump has moved to implement his pledge to save money, eliminate waste and shift the political priorities of the vast federal bureaucracy. This encompasses the Treasury Department, "foreign aid," "diversity" programs across all federal agencies and more.

He established the Department of Government Efficiency and appointed

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Inside

The working class in power relies on our own fighting capacities 9

Film shows historic fight against solitary confinement 2

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Teamsters strike Hertz at airports in contract fight

Bakkavor food workers step up strike action in England

Film shows historic fight against long-term solitary confinement

"The Strike," a documentary, directed by Joe Bill Muñoz and Lucas Guilkey.

BY BETSEY STONE

OAKLAND, Calif. — I was glad to see that "The Strike," a film about the 2013 prison hunger strike in California was aired on the PBS program Independent Lens Feb. 3.

This fight, which involved more than 30,000 prisoners at the high point, is one that needs to be known. It is an example of how, with leadership, working people — including those behind bars — can

resisted, organizing a strike that spread from prison to prison.

Supporters of the hunger strike outside the prisons backed up the fight inside. The film features the organizing efforts of Dolores Canales, a Los Angeles leader of California Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement, whose son was in Pelican Bay. You see footage of the many protests spearheaded by the families, former prisoners and others.

Film based on interviews

The film is based on interviews with participants in the strike, who describe their lives in solitary, how they fought to not be broken, how they were empowered and transformed by the struggle.

But I was disappointed the film didn't make clear the decisive role of the central leaders of the fight from Pelican Bay. Four prisoners, one Black, one white and two Latinos, worked to unite prisoners around clear demands, negotiated with prison authorities and helped organize a broader group of prisoner representatives to participate in decision-making. Those like myself, part of the support movement on the outside, were inspired by what these leaders did and said.

Overcoming gang and other rivalries used by their jailers to divide and rule was fundamental to success. As Todd Ashker, one of the four, explained, "Our current collective movement began in the bowels of the Pelican Bay State Prison — SHU — Short Corridor, wherein prisoners of all races and various geographical areas became openly conscious of what we had in common — rather than what was different."

While Ashker remains behind bars,



Militant/Betsy Stone

Protest in Sacramento, California, July 30, 2013, backing prisoners' hunger strike against indefinite solitary confinement. Four prisoners, Todd Ashker, Arturo Castellanos, George Franco and Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, led what grew to some 30,000 prisoners to win a historic victory.

another of the central leaders, Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, is now free. When he spoke in Oakland at one of the first showings of the film, he stressed the importance of the "Agreement to End Race-Based Hostilities," signed onto by white, Black and Latino prisoners in 2012. This agreement, undercutting attempts by prison authorities to pit racial groups against one another, was a precondition for carrying out a united fight.

A high point of the film is footage of negotiations between these four leaders and a prison representative in 2011. You see how the collective action of the strikers gave them confidence.

Long fight makes progress

The 2013 hunger strike was called off after 60 days, when legislators in Sacramento promised public hearings. They took place, and family members, ex-prisoners and others testified, but the state legislature didn't meet the prisoners' demands. Democratic Party Gov. Jerry Brown opposed the strike and backed the prison authorities.

A breakthrough came in 2015, when a lawsuit, Ashker v. Governor of California, brought by the Pelican Bay prisoners was settled. The agreement said solitary confinement could only be imposed for specific acts and for a fixed length of time, a significant victory.

Before the settlement, inmates could be "validated" by prison authorities as gang members and put in the SHU

merely on the basis of a supposedly gang-related tattoo, possession of a book, letter or piece of art, or the words of other prisoners. Review for possible release took place only once every six years. In order to get out of the SHU, you had to "debrief," that is finger others as gang members — a practice calculated to dehumanize and increase division and violence among prisoners.

As struggles continued to get the agreement implemented in the following years, the Pelican Bay SHU was nearly emptied out.

The Pelican Bay prisoners were inspired by a book about Irish independence fighter Bobby Sands, who died in a 1981 hunger strike. Opposing the prison authorities attempts to block books and newspapers, including the *San Francisco Bay View*, *Prison Focus* and the *Militant* that carried news of the struggle, from getting into the prisons was an important part of the fight.

At the press conference announcing the settlement, a statement released by Jamaa and nine other prisoner-plaintiffs was read by Jamaa's sister, Marie Levin. "We recognize that achieving our goal of fundamentally transforming the criminal justice system and stopping the practice of warehousing people in prison will be a protracted struggle," it said. "We are fully committed to that effort and invite you to join us."

"The Strike," can be viewed for free on the PBS Independent Lens website.

IN REVIEW

unite and make history, transforming ourselves in the process.

The strike was part of a multiyear struggle that ended long-term, indefinite solitary confinement in California. It led to many held in solitary being released into the general prison population, and for some to be freed.

In 2013, it was not well known that over 4,000 prisoners in California were being held in indefinite solidarity confinement, many for decades. The hunger strike changed that. It put a spotlight on the barbarity involved, what it meant to put human beings in tiny concrete cages for years almost devoid of human interaction, with little or no perspective of getting out.

The film takes you inside the Pelican Bay State Prison in the far north of California where prisoners were locked in Security Housing Units called the SHU. You see the tiny 8-by-10-foot windowless cells. You also learn how the pris-

THE MILITANT

Bans on Russian culture are blow to defense of Ukraine

The deepening anti-war sentiment among Russia's working people — Ukraine's most important ally — is undercut by bans on Russian authors and musicians, as well as economic sanctions by Washington and other governments that hit Russian working people the hardest.



Sipa USA Via AP/Mykola Myakshykov
Statue of Russian poet Alexander Pushkin torn down in Dnipro, Ukraine, in 2022.

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Workers need a party of labor

Continued from front page

in recent hotel strikes here,” Simpson said. “Ending the fear of deportation that undocumented workers face will strengthen the fight of all workers and our unions for better wages and working conditions.”

Several participants at the action told Simpson that they, or people they knew, had benefited from earlier amnesties for millions under the administrations of Ronald Reagan in 1986 and George H.W. Bush in 1990.

At the Militant Labor Forum in New York City Feb. 15, Craig Honts, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor in New Jersey, also addressed these questions.

“The fact that we all share the same needs will become clearer to working people as they work and fight together,” Honts said. “In the struggle for a break from the bosses’ Democratic and Republican parties, and for a party of labor, unifying the working class is key.”

Under capitalism, he said, “workers are driven to compete against each other for jobs, but we have the same interests. The fight for an amnesty is a clarion call for workers’ unity.”

Honts and Simpson are part of 2025 campaigns the SWP has announced in eight states — California, Florida, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Party campaigners explain that all labor and social battles are political struggles, where the two major social classes confront each other — the capitalist ruling families versus the millions of workers and others exploited and oppressed by capital.

The SWP calls for a party of labor, based on the unions, to lead tens of millions to fight to take political power from the U.S. rulers into our own hands, as part of the fight for a socialist world.

Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey governor, discussed with a worker who came from Egypt why workers should back Israel’s fight to defeat and dismantle Hamas. Kuniansky met her on her doorstep in Jersey City Feb. 16.

“She told me she didn’t like President Donald Trump’s proposal for Palestinians in Gaza to be sent to Egypt,” Kuniansky told the *Militant*, “not because she’s not concerned about them, but because she doesn’t want Hamas in Egypt. ‘Wherever Hamas goes, they destroy everything,’ she said.”

Kuniansky pointed out the U.S. rulers intervene in the Middle East to advance their own imperialist interests, not to defend Jews or the interests of working people. “That’s why the SWP says workers need our own foreign policy, based on the interests we share with fellow workers worldwide.”

In Minneapolis, Nour Adow, 43, a mental health worker, welcomed Kevin Dwire, the SWP’s candidate for mayor, and party member Mary Martin into his home Feb. 16.

“You are the first mayoral candidate to come to my door,” he told Dwire. “If you were with one of the two usual parties, I wouldn’t have bothered to open the door.” SWP candidates say they are getting a broader hearing today.

During the hourlong visit, Adow, Dwire and Martin discussed the revolutionary working-class leadership shown by Malcolm X and his example for working people today, as well as the importance of the fight against Jew-hatred and to defend Israel as a refuge. Adow said he wanted to find out more about the SWP, signed up for a *Militant* subscription and made plans to visit the party’s campaign headquarters.

SWP on Fort Worth ballot

SWP candidates join in today’s union struggles and help build solidarity that is crucial to their outcome.

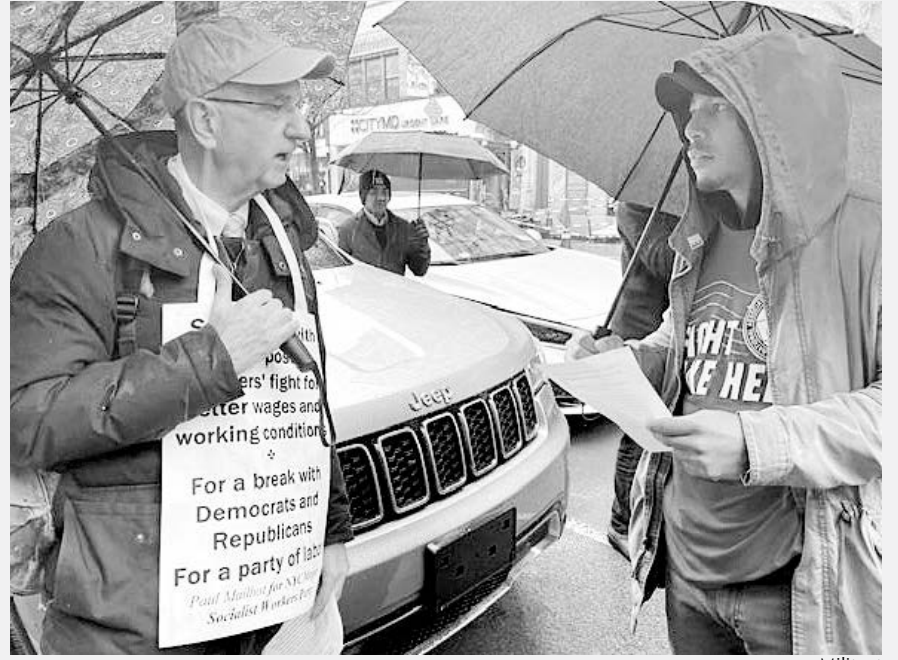
Alyson Kennedy, the party’s candidate for mayor in Fort Worth, Texas, joined a rally in solidarity with Teamsters on strike for better wages and conditions at the Hertz car rental facility at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport Jan. 30.

Both Kennedy and Hilda Cuzco, SWP candidate for City Council in District 11, have won a spot on the ballot for the May 3 election.

The Fort Worth Report listed Kennedy as one of the eight candidates in the race. “Kennedy is a political activist,” it said, who “has been the Socialist Workers Party’s nominee for vice president and president in several presidential elections.”

In Cincinnati, SWP City Council candidate Ned Measel campaigned at a West Side apartment complex where he met Larry Johnson, a school bus driver. “Everywhere we go,” Measel told Johnson, “the SWP explains our goal is

SWP mayoral candidate: ‘Back letter carriers’ fight!’



Militant

NEW YORK — Paul Mailhot, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, joined some 60 postal workers and their supporters, in spite of heavy rain, in the Harlem neighborhood here Feb. 16 to rally in solidarity with the National Association of Letter Carriers. Its members across the country have been locked in a nearly two-year-long fight for a new contract.

“Wages are always an issue, Hector Narvaez, pictured above, told Mailhot. “Also adequate staffing. Since COVID, they keep extending our hours — usually we work 10 to 12 hours.”

Quincy Lashley also pointed to long hours as a big question. He explained when workers can’t get their routes done by the 9 p.m. deadline supervisors will say, “Don’t worry, stay out another hour.”

Members of the union “are fighting for higher wages and better working conditions, to defend their health care and retirement,” said a statement by Mailhot distributed to rally participants. “The entire labor movement should back this fight and mobilize in support.”

— SANDRA LATHAM

to build the leadership that’s necessary to lead workers to take political power.”

“That’s good,” Johnson replied, “because it seems like workers are all alone on almost everything. The kids I drive to school have special needs, and their families don’t get much help at all. Working people always seem to come last.”

“We have a powerful example of how workers can change society,” Measel said. “The Cuban Revolution

shows it’s possible to overturn capitalist rule and put the workers in power.” In the fight to make the revolution, millions of the exploited and oppressed were drawn into struggle, gaining confidence in their own capacities and deepening class consciousness.

“That’s what we need here and worldwide,” he said.

To help campaign for the SWP candidates, contact the campaign office nearest you listed on page 8.

Unions protest Amazon shutdown, layoffs in Quebec

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

MONTREAL — Hundreds of members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) and other unionists marched and rallied in the snow here Feb. 15 to protest Amazon’s move to shutter its seven Quebec distribution centers. Union flags identified teachers, office workers, steelworkers, autoworkers, nurses and numerous union federations.

The CSN estimates job losses at over 4,000. “Returning to a third-party delivery model supported by small local businesses, similar to what we had

in 2020,” the company claimed, “will provide the same good service, and even cost savings for our customers in the long run.”

“On Jan. 22 at 2:00 a.m., bosses informed us that we’d be laid off as of Feb. 8. They said they hadn’t made money for the past four years. But it’s really because of the union,” Hassam Abakar Ali, who worked at the Laval warehouse, told the *Militant*. “We wanted to unionize because the work is hard. And our rights weren’t respected.”

“It’s acting like a bandit, when a multinational like Amazon closes its doors leaving hundreds of workers with injuries,” Jean-Baptiste Uguelin, also from Laval, told the rally. Uguelin does weekly physiotherapy for a back injury.

Dozens of striking hotel workers joined the march. Yves Olivier, on strike at the Hotel PUR since August 2024, came from Quebec City. “In life, freedom and social justice were never given for free. They were won in battle,” he told the *Militant*.

“We’ve been out since July,” Lili Merzouk, a housekeeper on strike at Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, said. “It started with a one-hour strike, then 24 hours, now

it’s unlimited. We’re here to stand in solidarity.”

Union officials and Martin Caron, general president of Quebec’s Union of Agricultural Producers, led the march, holding a banner reading, “Buy local, boycott Amazon. No contract, no purchases.”

“We join Amazon workers’ fight for a union — throughout Canada, in the U.S. and beyond,” Philippe Tessier, a Teamster rail worker and Communist League candidate in Montreal’s Bourassa riding in the upcoming federal elections, told the *Militant*. “Union strength will be built by mobilizing independently in the fight for jobs, for union rights.”

Amazon workers at a warehouse near Vancouver, British Columbia, signed up with the Unifor union and are pushing for union certification. A couple dozen rallied at Amazon-owned Whole Foods in solidarity with the Quebec action. “Amazon is the driving force behind the race to the bottom for warehouse and delivery workers,” Dustin Saunders, a rail worker and Teamsters member, told the *Militant* at the rally. “Amazon and other unorganized workers need to be unionized to be able to fight for workers’ rights, especially in health and safety.”

Socialist Workers Party Campaign Join in building the working-class alternative

California

Eric Simpson, mayor of Oakland

Florida

Laura Anderson, mayor of Miami

Minnesota

Kevin Dwire, mayor of Minneapolis
Edwin Fruit, Minneapolis City Council

New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, governor
Craig Honts, lieutenant governor

New York

Paul Mailhot, mayor of New York City

Ohio

John Hawkins, mayor of Cincinnati
Ned Measel, Cincinnati City Council

Pennsylvania

Tony Lane, mayor of Pittsburgh

Texas

Alyson Kennedy, mayor of Fort Worth
Hilda Cuzco, Fort Worth City Council

Despite US economic war, 'here we are, opening Cuba's yearly book festival'

BY RACHELE FRUIT
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HAVANA — “We’re confronting a difficult world situation and the intensification of the U.S. economic blockade against Cuba — but here we are, opening the 33rd Havana International Book Fair!” said Juan Rodríguez Cabrera, president of the Cuban Book Institute. He was speaking Feb. 13 at the inaugural event of the book fair, this country’s biggest annual cultural event. After 10 days in Havana, a sampling of the fair will travel to every province across the island.

The determination to hold the book festival this year despite enormous economic challenges, Rodríguez said, underscores “the value that is given to books and reading” by the Cuban government — and by millions of working people here.

Despite shortages of fuel and other resources that have sharply curtailed bus transportation in Havana — one of the many consequences of Washington’s brutal economic war against the Cuban Revolution — thousands of people have made their way to the book fair, which is being held at the San Carlos de la Cabaña, a colonial fortress overlooking Havana Bay.

To make the fair more accessible to Havana’s population, book presentations, donations of books, poetry readings and musical performances are being held at cultural institutions around the city, as well as in community centers, schools, job sites, hospitals and prisons.

One of the themes of this year’s book fair is the 130th anniversary of the death in combat of Cuba’s national hero, José Martí, the central leader of Cuba’s war for independence from Spanish colonial rule in the late 19th century. A number of presentations at the book fair feature works by Martí.

Rodríguez reported that, despite acute shortages of paper and ink, a project called the Popular Library has been launched. It has already published more than 60 classics of Cuban and world literature, especially children’s books, in both printed and digital formats.

This effort draws on the example of earlier initiatives during the Cuban Revolution. The first Popular Library was launched just months after the 1959 revolutionary victory, and it received an enormous boost from the 1961 mobilization of hundreds of thousands of young Cubans in a campaign that taught millions of working people in the countryside and in towns to read and write. It turned Cuba into the first “Territory Free of Illiteracy” in the Americas.

How the revolutionary government led by Fidel Castro took steps from the beginning to encourage reading and book publishing is the subject of one of the titles presented at the fair, *Fidel y la industria editorial cubana* (Fidel and the Cuban publishing industry) by Francisca López Civeira and Fabio Enrique Fernández.

For most working people in Cuba, “the world of books was almost nonexistent in the 1950s. That was transformed by the revolution,” which massively expanded access to culture and education,

Fernández said at the book launch.

The country of honor at this year’s book fair is South Africa. At the inaugural event, attended by a visiting delegation from South Africa, Rodríguez highlighted the close relations between Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela. Mandela was the central leader of the struggle for a nonracial, democratic South Africa that overturned the segregationist regime there in the 1990s. He often thanked revolutionary Cuba for its decisive contribution to the fight for freedom in South Africa and across the continent.

On the first full day of the Havana book fair Feb. 14, a special program called “Africa in our veins” was sponsored by Verde Olivo, the publishing house of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR). The presentation high-



Militant/Martin Koppel

Col. José Manuel Cereijo, head of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces Center for Military Studies, giving presentation on first full day of the Havana book fair Feb. 14 on internationalist missions by Cuban volunteer combatants in Africa over more than six decades.

lighted the internationalist missions by Cuban volunteer combatants in Africa over more than six decades. They aided freedom struggles from Algeria to the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia and

Angola. Presented by Col. José Manuel Cereijo, head of the FAR’s Center for Military Studies, it was dedicated to some 4,000 Cuban combatants who fell during these missions.

East Palestine meetings two years after train derailment

Continued from front page

have symptoms two years later. Chemicals detected from the fires are known to cause cancer.

Residents rallied here Feb. 3 to demand the new Trump administration take steps to provide for their long-term needs.

Aino Mahon, a lifelong resident of East Palestine, attended the rally. “We need guaranteed health care for life,” she told the *Militant*. “I had a rash for nine months. I want to leave, but my husband wants to stay. I won’t let my grandkids come to my house.”

“I live 1.1 miles from the wreck site,” Christa Graves said. “We evacuated. The whole thing was mismanaged. I called everyone I knew and urged them to leave. Then they released the evacuation order. No one knew that it wasn’t safe. I’m still having migraines.”

Vice President J.D. Vance visited the town that day. “President Trump just wanted to deliver a message that this community will not be forgotten, will not be left behind,” he told the press. “And we are in it for the long haul in East Palestine.”

Jami Wallace, organizer of the East Palestine Unity Council, said she’s disappointed Vance didn’t announce Washington was finally enacting a federal disaster declaration, which has been a central demand of the community. “He should have talked to the residents and the health experts.”

“Creeks are still contaminated. They are still finding pockets of soil contaminated with vinyl chloride at the wreck site,” she said.

Norfolk Southern ruled responsible

In June of 2023 the National Transportation Safety Board held a public hearing in East Palestine. Four rail unions participated — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, SMART-TD, the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, and the Transportation Communications Union/IAM, which represents carmen.

Jason Cox, from the TCU Carmen’s Division, described how the time allowed for union workers to conduct train inspections has been slashed. He said it used to be three minutes or more

per car, but now they’re given only 30 seconds per side to inspect a car. The Norfolk Southern train that derailed here had a faulty wheel bearing.

The NTSB investigation report also determined that the “controlled burn” of vinyl chloride was unnecessary.

Another program on the disaster was held in Austintown, Ohio, Feb. 2. New Jersey toxicologist George Thomson described all the chemicals detected from the disaster and the health risks of each, primarily cancer.

“I live less than a half mile from the derailment site. Since then, I’ve had massive heart failure,” Chris Albright said. “Nothing in the last two years

has changed. What happened in East Palestine will happen again. I don’t want to see anyone else go through what we are going through.”

Tony Lane, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, told the meeting, “My party’s members spent time going door to door in the area after the crash. People would raise with us, ‘Where was the caboose?’ We say all trains should have a maximum of 50 cars and a crew of four — two on the head-end and two on the rear. Only with the unions fighting for workers control can trains be run safely for both the workers and the communities they pass through.”

End prison bans on the ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

its existence as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms, like the one carried out by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, against Jews in Israel. The text box reports on how Hamas’ origins trace back to the Nazi Holocaust and Adolf Hitler’s determination to subject Jews to a “Final Solution.”

“These news articles simply report the facts about what is happening in Israel and Gaza and why all working people should oppose Jew-hatred,” *Militant* staff writer Seth Galinsky, the author of both, said. “At the same time, they point out the need for Jewish, Arab, immigrant and other workers to come together in defense of their common class interests. How could this possibly be a ‘threat to the security’ of the prison or the safety of anyone?”

There are 14 *Militant* subscribers at Santa Rosa Correctional Institution and 110 overall in Florida state prisons. *Militant* attorney David Goldstein, from the well-known constitutional rights law firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman, is preparing the paper’s appeal to have the ban overturned.

The Florida prison system, the third largest in the country, has a long history of censoring literature. According to PEN America, Florida prison authorities have censored more than 22,000 books, the most of any state. Over the years, the *Militant* has fought a number of impoundments by Florida prison au-

thorities, winning most of them.

Goldstein also represents the *Militant* in its ongoing fight against the ban of the Nov. 11, 2024, issue by the Lower Buckeye Jail in Phoenix, the largest detention center in Arizona. The prisoner notifying the *Militant* of this impoundment said he has subscribed for seven years, writing, “I am a fan of the *Militant* and love reading its content.”

Ongoing fight in Arizona

The Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office says this issue was impounded because “a photo on the cover of the newspaper” violated MCSO policy, which “does not allow photos of weaponry.”

The photo illustrates armed Hamas thugs seizing a woman and taking her hostage during the Oct. 7 pogrom. The photo — which appeared in newspapers all across the country and worldwide — accompanied a *Militant* article explaining why the fight against Jew-hatred and the potential for a new Holocaust is crucial to the working class in the Middle East and worldwide.

Goldstein appealed the Phoenix ban Jan. 13. The “confiscation of an inmate’s political literature violates the First Amendment,” he wrote. “It is discriminatory and arbitrary, in violation of the *Militant*’s right to Due Process and Equal Protection under the Constitution’s 14th Amendment.”

The *Militant* currently has 307 prison-

Continued on page 9

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Teamsters strike Hertz at airports in contract fight

FORT WORTH, Texas — Some 45 members of Teamsters Local 745 set up strike picket lines at the Hertz car rental facility at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport Jan. 18 after the company refused to offer a new contract with better wages and conditions. New hires today start at \$14.50 an hour and workers can be forced to work unlimited overtime.

“Hertz Teamsters are done with the disrespect,” Brent Taylor, secretary-treasurer of Local 745 and southern region international vice president, told the media.

“I’ve worked at Hertz for 15 years and only make \$18 an hour. Inflation keeps going up, but our wages are stagnant,” striker Rashid Ahmad told the *Militant* on the picket line. “I have three kids, a mortgage and a car loan. I can’t make it.”

“We are out here for a fair contract and competitive wage,” Tiffany Furnace said. “I only make \$16.50 an hour.” Strikers said that the company is using web check-in and AI to try and replace union jobs.

Hertz also owns Dollar and Thrifty car rentals. “During COVID-19 we did the jobs of all three companies and they gave us nothing in return,” Tracy Milian said.

“We organized the Teamsters union here in 2009,” Mark Milian, who has worked for Hertz for 36 years, said. “We are out here for more benefits and wages. And we’re trying to get Martin Luther King Day as a holiday.”

The Teamsters organize more than 4,000 Hertz workers across the country. Members of Teamsters Local 769 in Florida went on strike at the West Palm Beach International Airport Feb. 1. Ten days later, more than 100 Teamsters walked out at Hertz at the Miami International Airport.

— *Alison Kennedy*

Bakkavor food workers step up strike action in England

SPALDING, England — Hundreds of Unite union members at the Bakkavor food factory here have been on strike for nearly five months fighting for better pay. Since Feb. 11 they have reinforced their picket lines, determined to defend their union.

At least 60 workers were on the picket line when *Militant* worker-correspondents showed up Feb. 13 to bring solidarity and help spread the word about their fight. Traffic was backed up past the factory, as dozens of strikers walked across the main entrance, delaying cars and trucks coming in and out.

“We’ve reorganized so we have enough people on all shift changes to have an impact,” Unite organizer Sam Luczynski told us.

Workers have been attempting to convince both delivery drivers and their co-workers not to cross the picket line. “Yesterday a lorry and a van turned around,” Luczynski said.

Bosses are refusing to negotiate. They’re busing in strikebreakers from temp agencies and other factories and pressuring workers to break with the union and sign individual contracts. The strike is increasingly being fought over whether workers will have a union.

“They want us to become like other food factories, where people have no paid breaks, no overtime premium and no double-time for public holi-

days,” one striker said. Bakkavor bars workers from speaking publicly.

To broaden international solidarity with the strike, Unite organizers recently made a second trip to Reykjavik, Iceland, where they have won support from local unions and gotten media coverage. Iceland is home to major Bakkavor shareholders Agust and Lydur Gudmundsson.

— *Pamela Holmes*

Sydney Trains workers fight for new contracts over safety, rosters

SYDNEY — Electricians working for Sydney Trains walked off the job for eight hours here Feb. 12, part of an ongoing fight for a new contract. Some 200 members of the Electrical Trades Union from different depots joined a rally in the city center before marching on the state Parliament. Chanting “Union power!” they marched behind a coffin painted, “Workers safety comes last.”

Sydney Trains is run by the New South Wales state government. This is the first work stoppage there in decades.

Workers from the Hornsby depot told the *Militant* they’re fighting for parity with electricians who do the same work at private companies. Another issue is the way shifts are allocated. They said workers can end a night shift at 6 a.m. and then be scheduled for the following day at 5 a.m. It gives no time for family. Workers carried placards demanding, “More work-life balance.”

“We’re marching because Sydney Trains is trying to water down safety, which will lead to loss of jobs and safety standards,” union organizer Jesse Savill said.

The bosses are trying to remove parts of the contract that cover workers being consulted on safety and rosters. And the union is fighting for workers to have a say when new technology is introduced. “We’re sending a clear message to the Labor government, there’s no way we will give away safety and consultation about changes,” Electrical Trades Union secretary Allen Hicks told the rally.

At the same time, members of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union at Sydney Trains have been fighting for over nine months for a contract for 13,000 work-



Militant/George Chalmers

Members of Teamsters Local 745 picket Hertz car rental facility at Dallas Fort Worth airport Jan. 30. The unionists went on strike Jan. 18 for higher wages, better work schedules.

ers. After negotiations with the state Labor government broke down Feb. 13, the union proposed that drivers take limited industrial action by a slowdown.

The government responded by sending out notices threatening drivers that they wouldn’t be paid if they took action — effectively imposing a lockout, which caused chaos on the rail network.

— *Linda Harris*

British Columbia lab workers strike, rally against concessions

BURNABY, British Columbia — More than 200 striking lab technicians, members of the British Columbia General Employees’ Union, and their supporters held a spirited rally Feb. 16 against concessions demanded by LifeLabs, the province’s main privately owned health laboratory and one of Canada’s largest.

Handmade signs saying, “Overworked and undervalued” and “Burnout caused this turnout,” dotted the crowd. Chants like “When we fight we win!” could be heard, along with honking horns of support from passing drivers.

“The work that you do is incredibly important,” BCGEU President Paul Finch told the strikers. “If we don’t stop the company attacks on our working conditions it will get worse.” He pointed to members of other unions, including machinists, nurses, hospital, postal and brewery workers, who were there

to offer solidarity. “We’re demanding improved scheduling and more occupational health and safety protections.”

Some 1,200 BCGEU members will be organizing strike actions across the province. Their contract expired last April.

Since the government has declared them an “essential service,” making a systemwide walkout illegal, rotating strikes will be organized at different locations. BCGEU members from Kelowna, Victoria and Nanaimo joined the rally here.

Mandy DeFields, a lab technician and head of the bargaining committee, told the *Militant*, “We’re demanding wage parity between LifeLabs employees and technicians who do the same work in the public sector. Our wages are 4% to 16% behind them. We’re short-staffed and constantly asked to work overtime. We have no work-life balance and are understaffed and undervalued.” She added that their vacations have been cut back 80%, and the company wants another 20% cut.

Finch said it’s important to defend unions’ right to strike. It’s essential to the fight for better wages and working conditions. The federal government in Ottawa has used anti-labor laws to force workers back to work in every national strike since last August.

— *Ned Dmytryshyn*

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

February 28, 2000

HAVANA — “We are here because we have no choice but to learn how to fight, and we want to learn from those who know how to fight,” Eddie Slaughter told an official of the Cuban small farmers organization here. “You have been fighting the U.S. government for 40 years,” the Georgia farmer continued. “You have a lot of experience.”

Slaughter was one of six farmers from Georgia, Florida and New Jersey who landed at José Martí International Airport here Feb. 12, wearing colorful T-shirts inscribed with the words “Farmer to Farmer: US Farmers Trip to Cuba.”

Gladys Williams said, “I am impressed with the way of life in Cuba. There aren’t people with guns standing around telling people what to do and where to go like some people said there would be. We have been misled and lied to for a long time but now I am here and can see Cuba for myself.”

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 28, 1975

The Boston NAACP’s call for a united antiracist demonstration on May 17 opens the way for a massive mobilization to defend busing and deal a decisive rebuff to the rock-hurling racist mobs. The 2,000 participants in the National Student Conference Against Racism, representing more than 100 organizations and all parts of the country, endorsed this call for mass action.

The call by the NAACP, the largest and most authoritative civil rights organization in the country, and the breadth and success of the student conference, can pave the way for uniting in action broader forces than at any time since the civil rights battles of the early 1960s.

Labor has a particular responsibility to join the antiracist campaign. The rulers are trying to pit white workers against Black and thus weaken the unions in the face of the economic crisis.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 20, 1950

After nine weeks of secret negotiations the Kremlin, amid great fanfare, made public the text of an alliance of “amity and mutual assistance” with the People’s Republic of China for a term of thirty years.

Territorially, Stalin made no concessions whatsoever to Mao Tse-tung. He did insist on the formal detachment of the “Mongolian People’s Republic,” whose “independence” is now recognized by both sides. This vast territory is left as one of the Kremlin’s private preserves in Asia. Contrast this with the action of the Soviet state under Lenin and Trotsky who in 1921 in a treaty with Kemalist Turkey ceded the provinces of Kars, Ardahan and Artvin, previously grabbed by the Czars.

The Kremlin propaganda machine is making the most of it right now, not only abroad, but especially inside the Soviet Union and in the satellite countries.

Back Ukraine sovereignty!

Continued from front page

conflict in Europe since World War II. Capitalist powers worldwide are moving to rearm and advance their own national interests against rivals and allies alike. Trump seeks to protect Washington's weakening world dominance, in Europe and elsewhere. Driven by intensified competition over profits, markets and resources, ruling families everywhere are preparing for new wars to come.

Moscow has repeatedly attacked Ukraine's urban population and vital energy infrastructure, including its four active nuclear power plants. Putin's goal is to try to demoralize Ukrainian working people and blunt their fierce resistance. The drone armed with a warhead that hit Chernobyl was one of 133 launched by Russian forces the night of Feb. 13, 73 of which were intercepted.

At the same time, Putin's forces have suffered massive casualties and loss of equipment and weaponry. Photographs and intercepted military communications show Russian troops are now being provided with donkeys to move ammunition and supplies on the front in eastern Ukraine.

Shift in U.S. rulers' foreign policy

Many liberal commentators denounced Trump's overture to Putin as a "bombshell," despite the president's repeated election pledges to rapidly engage with Moscow to end the war.

Defense Secretary Peter Hegseth told NATO chiefs in Brussels Feb. 12 that both Kyiv's demand to join the U.S.-led NATO alliance and the return to Ukraine of all its sovereign territory occupied by Russian forces were "unrealistic" goals. He added it was up to Europe, not the U.S., to provide troops to keep the peace.

As Zelensky noted, "The old days are over when America supported Europe just because it always had." But, he insisted Ukraine would "never accept deals made behind our backs without our involvement."

"We want the war to come to a close. We want the killing to stop," Vice President JD Vance said at a Feb. 14 meeting with Zelensky, in Munich, Germany. "But we want to achieve a durable, lasting peace, not the kind of peace that's going to have Eastern Europe in conflict just a couple years down the road."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, led U.S. and Russian officials in further talks in Saudi Arabia Feb. 18. Their initial aim is to "normalize relations" between Washington and Moscow.

Trump administration officials are also pursuing a deal for major access to Ukraine's rare earth and other critical minerals. Kyiv seeks concrete U.S. security guarantees in response.

European powers sidelined

French President Emmanuel Macron called an "emergency" summit Feb. 17 after the European capitalist powers were left on the sidelines by developments. Leaders from Germany, the U.K., Italy, Spain, Poland and Denmark, along with European Union and NATO officials, joined Macron at the hastily convened meeting in Paris. Just like Washington, the capitalist rulers across Europe see Ukraine through the prism of their



The New Voice of Ukraine/Vodogray

After massive losses of men, vehicles and equipment over three years, Moscow is now forced to use donkeys to bring ammunition and supplies to troops on front line in Ukraine.

own national interests.

"The Socialist Workers Party unconditionally supports the battle by Ukrainian working people to defend their country's sovereignty," Joanne

Kuniansky, SWP candidate for governor of New Jersey, told the *Militant* Feb. 18. "We also call for all U.S. troops out of Europe and for an end to U.S. sanctions on Russia."

Australia nurses, unions show solidarity against Jew-hatred

BY JANET ROTH

SYDNEY — "I want to reassure Jewish people and Israelis that you can come to hospitals and we will provide care and you will be safe," said Michael Whaites, acting general secretary of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association, at a Feb. 13 rally here. The action was the union's response to a widely publicized online video of two nurses on night shift at Bankstown Hospital saying they would kill any Israeli patients who came under their care.

The union had originally planned to picket Parliament that day over their pay dispute with the government. After the video started playing, they turned it into a solidarity action "to make a clear statement on behalf of our members that there is no hate in health care," said Whaites. "We need to speak out against racism and bigotry."

The majority at the 100-strong rally were nurses in uniform. Other unions represented were the Public Service Association, the United Services Union and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. "It is important that unions stand together," said Whaites. "Words of hatred divide workers."

The airing of the video came after a wave of antisemitic attacks here. In January alone, two synagogues were defaced with Jew-hating slogans, and there was an attempt to set one on fire. A child care center was firebombed and graffitied. The former home of a Jewish spokesperson was covered in red paint; cars nearby were sprayed with graffiti and two set afire. An abandoned recreational vehicle was found to be loaded with explosives and a list of possible Jewish targets.

A report for the Executive Council of Australian Jewry reported a 316% increase in the overall number of anti-Jewish incidents throughout Aus-

tralia in the year after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas pogrom in Israel. On Dec. 6, 2024, the Adass Israel Synagogue in Melbourne was set on fire and destroyed.

The federal and New South Wales state governments, as well as health officials, rapidly sought to distance themselves from the two nurses' comments, and the pair were fired from their jobs. Sky News-TV reported that authorities at Bankstown Hospital were in damage control, deleting multiple images from the hospital's social media showing staff and visitors wearing pro-Palestine shirts.

While paying lip service to combating antisemitism, the federal government has consistently criticized Israel for its war to prevent Hamas from carrying out future pogroms, covering up Hamas' stated goal to destroy Israel and eliminate the Jews.

Fight against Jew-hatred

Sharon Stoliar, a midwife, told the media that antisemitism "had been left to fester" in the health care system. Shortly after the Oct. 7 pogrom, she said, "When nurses and midwives were chanting 'from the river to the sea' while wearing NSW Health uniforms, I wrote an open letter explain-

ing that this chant is a call for the annihilation of Jews, and that they should not be shouting this genocidal chant, let alone while wearing NSW Health uniforms." The response of health authorities was to place *her* under investigation.

In the name of combating antisemitism, the NSW government moved to further restrict freedom of speech by tightening laws against "hate speech."

Robert Aiken, Communist League candidate for the New South Wales Senate in the forthcoming federal election, commended the nurses' union for the solidarity rally they organized. "It is only through workers and our unions taking action together that the growing attacks against the Jewish people can be combated," Aiken said. "We need to be able to have the fullest discussion and debate about Jew-hatred and the stakes for the working class in fighting against it. And we should oppose government restrictions on our democratic rights to do this."

"The fight being waged in the Middle East to defend Israel as a refuge for Jews is where the central battle against Jew-hatred in the world is being fought today," he told the *Militant*. "Israel winning this war deserves the full support of the working class and unions."

Protest three years of war on Ukraine!

RUSSIAN TROOPS OUT!
SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE

Washington, D.C., Feb. 22

• 2 p.m. at Lincoln Memorial

London, Feb. 22

• 12 p.m. Assemble St. Volodymyr Statue

• 1 p.m. Rally Russian Embassy

Montreal, Feb. 23

1 p.m. Corner Dorchester Sq. and Peel

For information on other actions, contact Ukrainian Canadian Congress

Read more about
Socialist Workers Party program



from pathfinderpress.com

Israel: Hamas must be destroyed

Continued from front page
they are all either dead or gone.

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told Al Jazeera Feb. 16 that the Oct. 7, 2023, slaughter of 1,200 people in Israel and the taking of more than 250 hostages was a “historic success” that shows “that Israel’s defeat is possible.” This is the reactionary group’s central goal, no matter how many thousands of Gazan civilians get killed as a result of Hamas’ strategy of using them as human shields.

The *Washington Post* reported that the Israeli military is putting together plans to strike nuclear weapons development sites in Iran. In response, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said, Feb. 13, “If you hit a hundred [sites], our experts will build a thousand.”

Pezeshkian’s response reaffirmed the determination of the regime in Iran to acquire the means to annihilate Israel and the Jews.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Brig. Gen. Ali Fadavi threatened Feb. 17 that Iran will carry out new missile strikes against Israel at the “appropriate time.”

All this is why Israel needs to target the Iranian regime’s facilities used to develop and deploy nuclear weapons.

More hostages to be released

Hamas announced Feb. 18 that it would release six more hostages from Israel — including two held for years before 2023 — along with the corpses of four others by the weekend. That would complete 10 days early the releases of living hostages agreed to in the first phase of the ceasefire, which began Jan. 19. Hamas says that eight of the hostages originally on the list to be released in the first phase are dead.

With each hostage release, more facts are coming out about their torture and deliberate starvation by Hamas.

In exchange Israel will release 47 Palestinians accused of terrorist acts along with all Gazan women and minors under 19 years old detained since Oct. 8, 2023, who were not combatants. In addition, Israel will allow the entry of mobile homes and heavy construction equipment into Gaza.

As much as 70% of the residential buildings in Gaza have been destroyed, including some 245,000 homes, because Hamas set up its military bases and storage facilities in or

next to them to launch attacks on Israel. While the construction machinery will be used to clear rubble, Hamas will be sure to also use it to rebuild their underground fortifications.

At the same time, negotiations between Israel and Hamas over the second phase of the ceasefire are beginning. Hamas is insisting that as part of releasing the remaining some 60 hostages — of which at least 35 are believed dead — Israeli troops completely withdraw from the territory.

Israel: Hamas must be dismantled

A central question in the negotiations will be ending Hamas’ rule in Gaza. Hamas claims it’s willing to concede political “control” to the Palestinian Authority, but will maintain its structures and armed groups.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says none of this is going to happen. Replacing Hamas with the Palestinian Authority would

Retired workers in Iran: ‘Government threats can’t stop us from protesting!’

BY SETH GALINSKY

Weekly protests by retirees from the oil, steel, telecommunications and sugar industries, along with retired teachers and other workers who find it impossible to make ends meet, have been taking place across Iran for well over a year and are expanding and getting a little bolder today. Wages and pensions don’t come close to keeping up with rising prices for food, housing and other essentials. Inflation is officially above 45% a year.

Working people from many nationalities — Persians, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Arabs and more — are joining the nationwide coordinated protests.

Workers widely oppose the attempts by the reactionary clerical regime to develop nuclear weapons, destroy Israel and kill or expel the Jews there.

U.S. economic sanctions, ostensibly imposed to pressure the Iranian regime to stop its nuclear weapons program, are making the crisis even worse for working people.

“A retiree’s salary lasts only a week”; “Our expenses are in dollars, our wages in riales”; and “Free health care is our undeniable right” were among the chants at the Feb. 16 protest by retired workers in Ahvaz — a city with large numbers from the Arab and Bakhtiari nationalities — one of more than a dozen similar actions that weekend.

Other slogans included “Neither the parliament nor the government cares about the people” and “Not threats, jailings or executions — nothing can stop us!”

Protesters in Ahvaz



Coordinating Council of Teachers Unions
Feb. 15 protest in Tehran by retired oil industry workers.



From video taken by Hamas
Kidnapping of Shiri Bibas and her two children by Hamas Oct. 7, 2023. After more than a year, Hamas told Israel it was returning their dead bodies, dashing hopes that they were still alive.

simply ensure that Hamas will rebuild and massacre Jews again.

Spurred by President Donald Trump’s plan for Gaza, for the governments of Egypt and Jordan to take in all the residents of Gaza and then

let U.S. companies “rebuild” the strip, some capitalist governments in the region are scrambling to come up with an alternative. Trump’s plan underscores the fact that Washington puts its own economic and political interests first and foremost.

The Egyptian regime has a counterproposal, discussed with the rulers in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, to relocate Gazans to “secure areas” inside Gaza while Egyptian and other foreign construction companies rebuild the territory.

Cairo envisions a new Palestinian administration without Hamas or the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority. But it would still rely on former Palestinian Authority police helped by cops trained by Egypt and others.

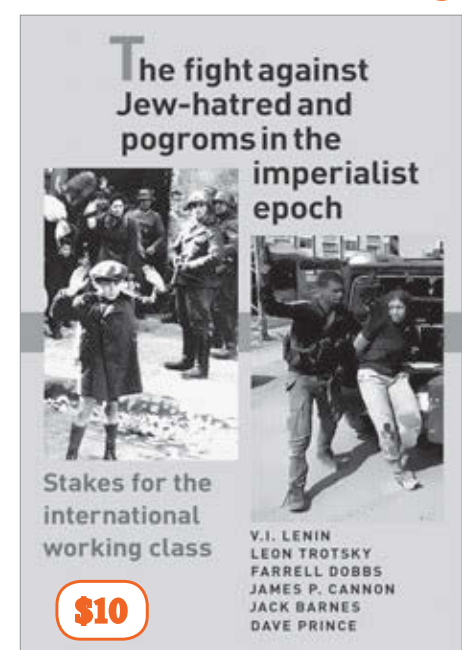
Ceasefire in Lebanon

Israeli troops completed their withdrawal from southern Lebanon Feb. 18, leaving five garrisons on high ground along the Israel-Lebanon border. Israel also tripled the number of troops it plans to station along the border.

Hezbollah agreed to the ceasefire after Israeli strikes destroyed 80% of its missile stock, wounded thousands of Hezbollah fighters and killed its central leader, Hassan Nasrallah. But Israeli officials say that Hezbollah has still not carried out the terms of the accord, which requires it to withdraw all its forces north of the Litani River.

Years before the current conflict, Hezbollah systematically violated an agreement to withdraw from the same area after pledging to do so in 2006.

Recommended reading



‘Anne Frank The Exhibition’ in New York City

A full-scale recreation of the Annex where Anne Frank and her family spent two years evading Nazi capture during the Holocaust is on display at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. Due to a large turnout, organizers have extended the exhibit until Oct. 31. This is “a chance to learn about Anne Frank, not as a victim but through the multifaceted lens of her life — as a girl, a writer, and a symbol of resilience and strength.”

Tickets are available at annefrankexhibit.org

pathfinderpress.com

Malcolm X: 'Intransigent opponent of both Democrats, Republicans'

For the 60th commemoration of the assassination of Malcolm X, Feb. 21, 1965, the *Militant* is featuring a selection from Malcolm X, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The excerpt is from a speech by Barnes on March 28, 1987, in Atlanta, "Malcolm X: Revolutionary leader of the working class." Barnes said his intention was to "make the case that Malcolm was a revolutionary leader of the working class in the United States." He quotes Malcolm explaining his opposition to the twin parties of capitalism — the Democrats and Republicans. Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Malcolm X, right, and Clifton DeBerry at Militant Labor Forum in New York Jan. 7, 1965. DeBerry, chairing the meeting, was the Socialist Workers Party 1964 candidate for president.

SPECIAL FEATURE

BY JACK BARNES

Malcolm X — speaking and acting from within the earth's strongest and wealthiest imperialist power, and from an oppressed nationality heavily working class in composition — was representative of this internationalization of proletarian leadership. It is not artificial to speak of Malcolm in the same breath as of V.I. Lenin, of Leon Trotsky, of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, of Maurice Bishop, of Thomas Sankara, of leaders of the communist movement in the United States such as James P. Cannon and Farrell

Dobbs. To do so registers something real. Not because we *want* it to, but because that's what the course of the world class struggle has *shown*. Other revolutionary leaders, from Nicaragua to South Africa, are being put to the same test — and many more will be, all over the world.

Malcolm correctly insisted that the struggle for Black freedom in the United States is part of an international struggle, a struggle for human rights not just civil rights. He refused to look at America through American eyes, or to look at the world through American eyes. He took his stand from within the oppressed and exploited in the battle for liberation the world over. That was his starting point. And that's the beginning of wisdom for any revolutionary today.

Malcolm rejected any notion that the oppressed could rely on some common humanity shared with the oppressors, or with a "well-meaning" section of the oppressors. There is no latent supply of love in the "soul" of all human beings, regardless of class, that can be tapped if they're shamed or pressured — or lobbied or voted for. There is no abstract, classless "humanity"; there is only human solidarity conquered in struggle as a social product of class solidarity, of solidarity in political action among the exploited and oppressed worldwide.

The job of revolutionists is not to act "responsibly," which in class-divided society can only mean "responsibly" toward the rulers, or at least the bourgeois liberals and bourgeois socialists among them. What revolutionists are responsible for is to advance along the line of march toward power of the toilers, who compose the great majority of humanity.

Don't "run around ... trying to make friends with somebody who's depriving you of your rights," Malcolm urged the Mississippi youth I mentioned earlier. "They're not your friends. No, they're your enemies. Treat them like that and fight them, and you'll get your freedom."

That's why Malcolm was an intransigent opponent of the Democratic and Republican parties, an opponent of the two-party system (with its occasional third-party eruptions to blow off steam) that has tied working people to capitalist politics since well before the rise of U.S. imperialism at the close of the nineteenth century. During Malcolm's final year, the 1964 U.S. elections were in full swing, with the incumbent president, Democrat Lyndon Baines Johnson, being challenged by Republican Barry Goldwater. With the exception of the Socialist Workers Party — and Malcolm X — virtually every political current in U.S. politics claiming to speak and act on behalf

of working people and the oppressed were going all out to defeat Goldwater. This was necessary to advance the fight for "peace" in Vietnam, they claimed. Some even warned of the triumph of "fascism" if Goldwater were elected. The Communist Party USA was leading the pack.

Of course, as we now know, the "peace candidate" Johnson, who was elected in November, went on to escalate the Vietnam War, raising U.S. troop levels *more than thirty-fold* from some 16,000 to 537,000 by the end of his term in January 1969 and initiating a murderous and sustained campaign of bombing and chemical warfare.

In July 1964, while in Africa, Malcolm learned that following a civil rights "summit meeting" in New York City, Martin Luther King and leaders of other organizations had called for a halt to demonstrations for Black freedom until after the November elections. In a statement reported in the *New York Daily News* and elsewhere, Malcolm commented that they had "sold themselves out and become campaign managers in the Negro community for Lyndon B. Johnson." Exactly.

Commenting a few months later on Johnson's re-election, Malcolm told a November 1964 meeting in Paris on his return trip from Africa that the U.S. capitalists "knew that the only way people would run toward the fox would be if you showed them a wolf. ... [They] had the whole world — including people who call themselves Marxists" (a reference to the CPUSA) "— hoping that Johnson would beat Goldwater." Malcolm continued: "Those who claim to be enemies of the system were on their hands and knees waiting for Johnson to get elected — because he is supposed to be a man of peace. And *at that moment* he had troops invading the Congo and South Vietnam!"

And in early 1965, when the Johnson administration began floating trial balloons about appointing a Black to his cabinet, Malcolm told the audience at a Militant Labor Forum in New York City, "Yes they have a new gimmick every year. They're going to take one of their boys, black boys, and put him in the cabinet, so he can walk around Washington with a cigar — fire on one end and fool on the other."

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The working class in power relies on our own fighting capacities

From time to time, parties on the left and more often on the right of capitalist politics try to sell workers on the virtues of “smaller and cheaper government.”

But the growing size of the capitalist state is an inevitable product of the class interests it serves. Rising national conflicts and wars, and violent class struggles mark the imperialist epoch. The size and scope of the rulers’ state is determined by their need to uphold their power in these clashes.

First and foremost, they require a powerful military and police apparatus and a far-flung spy operation under the guise of protecting “national security.” In addition, they rely on an army of tax collectors and a multitude of regulatory agencies, today propped up by plugged-in nongovernment organizations and nonprofits. All these institutions are staffed by middle-class functionaries convinced they were born to administer society. They view working people as objects, sometimes to be “handled” and increasingly to be beaten down.

Changing any of this requires changing which class rules.

The two great socialist revolutions of the 20th century — led by V.I. Lenin in Russia in 1917 and Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1959 — show this is possible.

The Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia overthrew the political rule of the bosses and landlords, replacing it with the rule of working people, based on popular councils of delegates chosen by millions of workers, peasants and soldiers. This government led workers to organize their own army that defeated counterrevolutionary forces and an imperialist

invasion. They also took increasing control of the organization of work in the factories and fields to run society for the immense majority.

Lenin advanced the right of self-determination for all oppressed nationalities — from Ukraine to Georgia — and organized a militant fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms. Literacy and electrification were advanced — bedrocks of modern civilization and culture, all to aid the working people to take control.

To combat bureaucracy and careerism, Lenin fought to draw combat-tested and respected work-

ers into all leading bodies.

During the revolutionary struggle in Cuba that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, working people were organized to take charge, beginning in the areas liberated by the Rebel Army where they began to transform social relations. A congress of peasants-in-arms was held, providing title to those who worked the land.

After the triumph of the revolution, mass organizations of working people — from youthful brigades that wiped out illiteracy to the Federation of Cuban Women and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution — were formed in neighborhoods across the island, drawing millions into shaping their own destiny.

These revolutionary governments, led by Lenin and Castro, dismantled the old repressive state apparatuses and entrenched bureaucracies that had served the exploiters.

The working class has no need for a big central government. What appear as insurmountable social problems under capitalism, will be resolved from the bottom up, not the top down, by the initiative, fighting capacities and mobilization of working people ourselves, once workers have taken political power.

Speed the day! That’s the perspective Socialist Workers Party candidates are presenting around the country. Join the campaign!



Workers rally in support of nationalization of imperialist-owned industries in Havana, August 1960. In power the working class will rule through its own actions. It has no need for the “big government” inherent to capitalist rule.

What does Trump’s war against ‘big government’ mean for working people?

Continued from front page

billionaire Elon Musk as a “special government employee” tasked with running it.

Many working people welcome steps aimed at reducing government intrusion and “nudges” into our lives by the self-serving middle-class meritocrats who run these agencies. Democrats and the middle-class left are enraged. They’ve turned to the courts to try to block implementation of DOGE’s steps to eliminate waste, “woke” mandates and politically motivated programs.

Just four weeks into the administration, 74 lawsuits have been filed against Trump’s actions, including those of Musk’s DOGE.

Liberals claim Trump’s cuts will hit services vital to working people. But a look at the agencies Trump is targeting so far tells a different story.

The administration has moved to dismantle the U.S. Agency for International Development. Its 10,000-strong staff dispenses “foreign aid” that’s used to prop up allied governments and grease the

palm of politicians allied with the party in power in Washington, as it advances the foreign policy goals of U.S. imperialism. Democrats got a compliant judge to suspend DOGE’s efforts.

Trump issued an executive order putting an end to diversity, equity and inclusion programs across the federal government, upending a crusade pushed by the Democratic Party administrations of both Barack Obama and Joseph Biden.

DEI programs were a source of perks and class advancement for the middle-class layers who ran them, and used them to deepen racial and class divisions. They are the opposite of the affirmative action programs set up in the 1970s that opened the door to the hiring of Black and women workers into jobs they’d been excluded from, gains that grew out of the Black-led movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation.

To shrink the bloated size of the government bureaucracy, the administration offered a buyout package to some 2 million government employees. They were offered their full salary and benefits for eight months if they left their jobs.

The five most senior FBI bosses were fired Jan. 31. The Justice Department is considering getting rid of the 2,400 spies who carried out the FBI’s Jan. 6 inquiry, along with thousands of recently hired snoops.

This isn’t a plan to cut back the FBI, rather the target is those agents who took responsibility for the Democrats’ assault on constitutional protections in their partisan drive to go after Trump and his allies. The capitalist state will retain its number one spy agency.

Democrats are determined to block the administration from whittling away at the bloated, bureaucracy they have spawned.

A flood of articles in the liberal press claim the administration is creating a “constitutional crisis,” as Trump tries to implement the program he ran and was elected on. Some claim DOGE’s initiatives are nothing less than a coup. Notwithstanding these claims, Trump said Feb. 11 he’ll abide by court rulings against his administration while he appeals.

Origins of modern imperialist state

The size and scope of today’s modern capitalist state, replete with invasive welfare corps, spy agencies and huge military forces, has its roots in the

rise of monopolies at the dawn of the imperialist epoch in the early 1900s.

The world’s dominant ruling classes needed a larger state apparatus to pursue their conflicts over the redivision of the world’s markets and resources, conflicts that would eventually lead to two imperialist world wars. An expanding capitalist state was also required to suppress rising revolts against colonial domination and, above all, to shield the rulers from revolutionary struggles by workers and their allies.

No capitalist government — Democratic or Republican — will break up what the imperialist rulers have put in place.

As part of this expansion, there has been a proliferation of bloated federal agencies, with growing powers to monitor, interfere with and administer the lives of working people. Trump wants to trim some of these agencies, especially those used by Biden, Obama, Bill Clinton and others, as well as those used to target him and his supporters. For good measure, Trump also cut off the federal government’s \$8.2 million worth of subscriptions to liberal mouthpiece *Politico*.

What Trump and Musk project as “smaller government” is nothing new under capitalism. Their view is that trimming away at the government bureaucracy will leave the regulation of society to the workings of the capitalist system. But this won’t help working people either.

Karl Marx, the founder of the modern communist movement, explained that only when the working class holds power can social relations be transformed and millions among the exploited and oppressed begin placing their stamp on the priorities of society.

Marx spelled this out in response to the establishment of the world’s first working-class government, the Paris Commune, in 1871.

“The Commune,” he wrote, “made the catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure — the standing army and State functionarism.”

They were replaced by the organization of the millions of working people themselves. The fight for workers power in the U.S., the only road to make that possible, is what the Socialist Workers Party exists to promote.

‘Militant’ prison bans

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er subscribers in 29 states. “Workers behind bars are part of the world,” said John Studer, editor of the *Militant*. “The fight to defend their right to read political views of their choosing is important so they can form their own opinions and participate in politics.

“And the *Militant* has the constitutional right to have its views reach its subscribers behind bars,” he said.

Join the fight to get the Phoenix impoundment overturned! Mail letters urging the reversing of the ban to: Ancillary Services Division Commander, MCSO, 3250 W. Lower Buckeye Road, Phoenix, AZ 85009. Email a copy to mcsocentralmailroom@mcsomari-copa.gov, and also to themilitant@mac.com.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced-rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the ‘Militant’ and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com